

**Sports Advisory Board
Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism
One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor
Hartford, Connecticut
Main Conference Room
September 18, 2008
9:00 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Present: Jim Abromaitis, Capitol City Economic Development Authority
Lynn Carlotto, Arena at Harbor Yard
Scott Ciecko, State Department of Higher Education
Wayne Dean for Thomas Beckett, Yale University
Robert Doherty, Special Olympics CT
Gene Doris, Fairfield University
Charlie Dowd, Dodd Stadium – Connecticut Defenders
Jill Ferraiolo, Connecticut State University System
Nathan Grube, Travelers Championship
Curt Jensen, Greater Hartford CVB
C.J. Jones, Central Connecticut State University
Jim Keener for Patricia Meiser, University of Hartford
Don MacKenzie, Boats Incorporated
Larry McHugh, Middlesex Chamber of Commerce – via conference call
Michael Mehigen, Office of Policy and Management
William Mudano, Connecticut Sports Management Group, Inc.
Michael Murtha, Athletic Department Mohegan Sun
Marie O’Brien, Connecticut Development Authority
Joe Oros, Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development
Gloria Ragosta, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Michael Savage, CT Interscholastic Athletic Conference
Chuck Steedman, Northland AEG
Jeff Vose, MetroHartford Alliance
John Willi, New Britain Rock Cats

Excused: Val Belmonte, Quinnipiac University
Kevin Bousquet, Lime Rock Park
Ron Drapeau, Connecticut State Golf Association
Jeffrey Hathaway, University of Connecticut
Rick Hazelton, Trinity College
Ann Miron, Sacred Heart University
Michael Roth, Wesleyan University
Anne Worcester, Pilot Pen Tennis

Guests/Staff

Leigh Johnson (Recording Secretary), Commission on Culture & Tourism
Karen Senich, Commission on Culture & Tourism

I. **Call to Order and Welcome**

Chairman Abromaitis called the Sports Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. **Recognize New Attendees**

Chairman Abromaitis welcomed new and returning members to the meeting. Roundtable introductions were conducted for new members attending the meeting.

After introductions were concluded the Chairman stated, during the last meeting the Advisory Board discussed and decided that information on various sporting events or events that are listed on university calendars be incorporated on the Commission's CTvisit.com website, thereby; centralizing all sports/sporting events throughout the state for the general public to access. In addition, a reciprocal link should be placed on your organization's website noting that all information on sporting events happening around the state can be obtain by visiting the CTvisit.com's website.

III. **Approval of August 28, 2008 Meeting Minutes**

On a motion made by Marie O'Brien, second by Chuck Steedman the minutes of August 28, 2008 were approved as circulated. All were in favor.

IV. **Review of Current State Funding of Sporting Events**

The Chairman acknowledged that he is working with the Office of Policy & Management (OPM) to gather information on the total amount of dollars currently expended for sporting events. Once this information becomes available the Board will need to review the accumulative total of funding currently expended to sports and the types of sporting events being funded. It is important to be mindful of the retention of existing premiere sporting events (such as i.e., Travelers Championship) in Connecticut, but equally important the attracting of new events to the state.

Legislators will want to know what has currently been expended especially if the Board makes a recommendation for funding. It would be advantageous to have the information accessible, along with a plan of action which outlines and details maximizing the state dollars invested for promoting and attracting sporting events and the potential economic impact to the state.

V. **Definition of Sporting Events**

"Sporting events" must be defined for the purpose of this Board's roll. Once we [Board] understand what the events are – what should the criteria be for either looking for dollars, or creating a pool and if created what would the mechanism be to access those dollars. What types of events are we currently attracting, and what other types of events should we be looking at that would create an import of dollars to the state.

It was noted that some sporting venues are looking to attract regional, national and international events (i.e. soccer/rugby) to become more active in these areas along with pursuing U.S. National and International teams to Connecticut. These events would have a need for seed money either private funding as-well-as public funding. Past experience in raising dollars typically for those events comes from corporate sponsorships and depending on the size and scope of the event there are a variety of opportunities available. Often times however, for national sporting events, the national governing body will limit local private sponsorship efforts.

For collegiate sports - there are two different bidding mechanisms that exist for conferences. Conferences will only deal with arenas and will only accept bids from arenas. With the NCAA, bids are generated through the host institutions. With some of the sporting authorities – it comes from the arena itself, and for others, it comes from the individual institutions. It was requested that the colleges/universities get together and recommend how SAB can attract college sporting events. Gene Doris from Fairfield University will lead a committee of colleges and universities in order to identify current and future collegiate events and recommend possible ways the state could partner in retaining or attracting them to Connecticut. Bill Mudano from the Nutmeg State Games will convene a group which should encompass “all other” sporting events. The group’s mission will be similar to the collegiate committee. Both groups will report back to the Board at its next meeting.

The Advisory Board would need to evaluate sporting events – whether it is regional, national or international events to determine what the impact/benefit would be to the state. For instance, rugby is a sporting event that brings people from around the world spending money for hotels and restaurants, etc. – this is a business case which justifies the investment and a possible investment for the state.

Part of the responsibility for the Board will be to develop a methodology to understand the impact, and at what point should the state be involved in an event, along with – a criteria of what types of events to be considered. For example – professional wrestling and mixed martial arts; would these types of events be attracted to the state in terms of funding or should these types of events be considered entertainment?

Ultimately the amount of state assistance that might be allocated for any designated sporting events will be predicated on its economic impact to the state.

Economic Impact Models

It was discussed at the last meeting to conduct an economic impact analysis on events. There are models that currently exist to conduct this study; however, it is unknown as to how accurate the estimates are on what an event could generate. It was noted that we take into account the sporting events at the casinos when we talk about the overall impact to the state.

The National Association of Sports Commissions has such a model for their members. This model was created by NASC who worked together with leading universities and experts in the sports and economic sectors to create a tool for all the sports commissions around the country to use, and it might be worth reviewing this tool to see if this is a model the Board

could utilize. It was recommended that what ever model is used, the Board should conduct a vetting process. Curt Jensen volunteered to take fellow board members: Lynn Carlotto, Mike Murtha, Marie O'Brien, and Chuck Steedman through the NASC model and present their findings at the next Board meeting.

In addition to gathering information with regard to inventorying of sporting venues and events, it is important to look at the other aspects of a bid package – hotels, restaurants, transportation etc., and bundle these assets that surround a sporting venue for inclusion with the bid package. Some of the CVB's may have this type of information for their area, but it is uncertain if there is one that compiles all this information for the state as a whole. Another item to consider is the scheduling of an event. The city/town may have the hotels and there may be three events going on which could create a shortage of rooms for an event being considered for the area and time period.

At the Board's request Joe Oros contacted Stan McMillen who is DECD's chief economist. The question was posed to Mr. McMillen in terms of resources – how would he go about conducting the study. In addition to surveying Board members and potential other entities, he would need all the numbers from the independent colleges: ticket sales and attendance by event; sponsor and the location event was held; cost to the private teams or the venue; and marketing efforts. He would need to review similar studies and would need a more refined definition of sporting events. It would take about 5-6 months to complete the study with a cost estimate of \$45,000 conservatively speaking. It was recommended to include Mr. McMillen in the sub-group reviewing the NASC model.

A major project for DECD is a mandate from the legislature to produce a comprehensive economic develop plan. A discussion ensued regarding whether the effects of sporting events should be part of that plan.

VI. **Future Meetings/Reporting**

In order to provide the various groups created today enough of time to gather the information and to review the economic model – it would be most appropriate for the Board to meet in January 2009. Leigh Johnson will notify members of the Board with proposed dates.

Karen Senich noted: by statute she is mandated to submit a report to the Commerce Committee on the status of the Board, 45 days prior to the first day of the session. The report will be more of a 1-2 page letter indicating the status and update of the Board, and the committees that have been established. Each member will receive a copy of the report.

VII. **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made and moved. All in favor.

For the next meeting

1. Copy of the Economic Impact Study for the CT Special Olympics – R. Doherty to obtain a copy if possible.
2. Coastal Fairfield CVB's Sports Related Events Study – Gene Doris to obtain a copy if possible.
3. Report from Bill Mudano "Other Sports" Committee
4. Report from Gene Doris "Collegiate Events" Committee
5. Report from Curt Jensen "NASC Model" Committee